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Southern District of New York*

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**U.S. CHARGES 2 ALLEGED 'HIT MEN' WITH CONSPIRACY
TO COMMIT MURDER AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced an Indictment charging HECTOR MANUEL RAMOS, a/k/a "Hitman Manny, a/k/a "Manny," and NELSON MORENO, a/k/a "The Getaway," a/k/a "ATF," with participating in four separate murders in 1992 and 1993, including the murder of a lawyer, as well as with possessing a firearm in connection with a crime of violence and with participating in a conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine and heroin.

According to the three-count Indictment unsealed late yesterday, from about 1985 through about 1998, a group of "hit men" known as "Tito's Crew" were held on retainer by Colombian drug dealers and available to those drug dealers to commit murder in the United States. Members of Tito's Crew were allegedly responsible for more than 20 homicides, including the murders of two people who acted as confidential informants for the Drug

Enforcement Administration. On occasion, Tito's Crew asked members of another group of hit men to accept contracts for murder. RAMOS and MORENO were members of this other group.

According to the Indictment, in the early 1990s, RAMOS and MORENO accepted and acted upon at least four contracts to murder, all of which originated with "Tito's Crew." In exchange for approximately \$5,000 each, between July 1992 and January 1993, they carried out these contracts and four separate people - Martin Lora, Ramon Garcia, Amdao Feliz, and Luis Beltre - were murdered in New York City. One of the victims, Beltre, was a lawyer. According to a Complaint filed in the case, RAMOS admitted that he shot the lawyer while MORENO admitted that he acted as the getaway driver.

In May 2003, the Indictment charges, RAMOS and MORENO accepted another contract to murder from the same person who had communicated the contracts to murder from "Tito's Crew." However, according to the Indictment, this person was acting in a sting as a "cooperating witness" at the time he gave the May 2003 contract. According to an earlier Complaint, during a recorded conversation in which RAMOS and MORENO participated on May 21, 2003, the defendants negotiated a price for the murder contract and RAMOS said he would complete the contract for a sum of money. Additionally, according to the Complaint, at some point during this recorded meeting, MORENO stated that he and RAMOS would handle the contract by approaching the victim and shooting him;

MORENO made sounds as if he were firing a gun: "Blap blap blap."
No murder was carried out.

RAMOS and MORENO are also charged with participating in a conspiracy to sell crack cocaine and heroin. According to the Indictment, on May 21, 2003, RAMOS and MORENO participated in a drug deal, selling another cooperating witness a quantity of crack cocaine and heroin.

If convicted of the narcotics conspiracy, each defendant faces a minimum term of 10 years in prison and a maximum term of life in prison. The firearms charge carries a penalty of a mandatory 5 consecutive years in prison with a possible life term. The murder-for-hire conspiracy carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts of the FBI and the NYPD. Mr. COMEY said the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorneys DANIEL M. GITNER and HELEN CANTWELL are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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